



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Office of the Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kerri Richardson
502.564.2611
502.330.6633

Terry Sebastian
502.564.2611
502.229.6130

Nancy Rodriguez
502.564.2000

**School Districts Stampede to Promote Graduation in ‘Blitz to 96’:
54 School Districts Adopt New Attendance Age in First 48 Hours**

‘Graduate Kentucky’ bill allows districts to increase compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18

FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 27, 2013) – Within two days of the official implementation of the “Graduate Kentucky” bill to promote high school graduation, 54 Kentucky school districts have voted to increase their compulsory attendance age.

On Tuesday, Governor Steve Beshear, First Lady Jane Beshear, and Education Commissioner Terry Holliday challenged the state’s school districts to adopt the new policy, and the leaders are encouraged by the districts’ enthusiastic response.

“I’m ecstatic that so many school districts are taking immediate steps to help students build a better future by encouraging them to stay in school through graduation,” said Gov. Beshear. “The fact that so many districts have adopted the graduation age so quickly shows that our communities understand the importance of changing this antiquated policy, and I congratulate them for their action.”

Senate Bill 97 (SB 97), known as the “Graduate Kentucky” bill, passed this year and phases in an increase in the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18, amending the school attendance law created in 1934.

The adoption of SB 97 is voluntary until 55 percent of the state’s school districts adopt the policy. Once 96 districts have approved the change, the remaining school districts must adopt and implement the policy within four years.

To encourage school districts to vote, Gov. Beshear and Commissioner Holliday launched the **“Blitz to 96”** initiative – a statewide push to reach the 55 percent threshold that will create the statewide attendance age standard. The first districts to adopt the policy in the **“Blitz to 96”** will be invited to Frankfort for a special news conference with the Governor and Commissioner to recognize them for their swift action.

The 54 school districts that have adopted the new policy puts the “Blitz to 96” initiative at more than halfway to its goal. More districts are expected to vote soon.

“As a former school teacher, I know that when you hold students to high standard, they will step up and achieve,” said Mrs. Beshear. “Districts that adopt the graduation age policy are putting faith in their students and placing a high value on education.”

“We are heartened by the number of school boards which, in the first hours they could, raised the compulsory school age to 18,” said Commissioner Holliday. “This signals that educators are committed to doing the right thing for their students and will continue to work with them to become college- and career-ready. We expect other boards and districts will adopt similar policies in coming days.”

The Kentucky Department of Education is providing \$10,000 planning grants to school districts that adopt the new attendance age policy in the 2013-14 school year. The funds are designed to be used to plan for full implementation in the 2015-16 school year.

Research shows that high school graduates live longer, are less likely to be teen parents, and are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children. High school graduates are also less likely to commit crimes, rely on government healthcare or use other public services.

More information about Graduate Kentucky, the Blitz to 96, and resources available to school districts is available at www.graduate.ky.gov.

A list of the 54 school districts that have already voted is below (as reported to the Kentucky Department of Education by 2:48 p.m. Wednesday). Note, as notifications to KDE are still being processed, this list may not reflect every district which has already voted.

Barren County Schools	Danville Independent
Bell County Schools	Dawson Springs Independent
Bowling Green Independent	Dayton Independent
Boyd County Schools	Elizabethtown Independent
Boyle County Schools	Elliot County Schools
Breathitt County Schools	Erlanger-Elsmere Schools
Bullitt County Schools	Floyd County Schools
Burgin Independent	Fulton Independent
Christian County Schools	Garrard County Schools
Corbin Independent	Green County Schools
	Hardin County Schools

Hart County Schools
Hazard Independent
Henry County Schools
Hopkins County Schools
Jackson Independent
Johnson County Schools
LaRue County Schools
Lawrence County Schools
Leslie County Schools
Logan County Schools
Marshall County Schools
Mayfield Independent
Schools
McCracken County Schools
Menifee County Schools
Mercer County Schools
Metcalf County Schools
Montgomery County Schools

Morgan County Schools
Murray Independent
Nicholas County Schools
Owsley County Schools
Paducah Independent
Powell County Schools
Pulaski County Schools
Rowan County Schools
Russell Independent
Simpson County Schools
Taylor County Schools
Union County Schools
Warren County Schools
Washington County Schools
Williamsburg Independent
Wolfe County Schools

###

Follow Governor Beshear on Twitter [@Govstevebeshear](https://twitter.com/Govstevebeshear), read the Governor's personal notes on his blog at <http://governor.ky.gov/blog>, and view the Governor's video commentaries at <http://www.youtube.com/governorbeshear>.